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Digital Spaces and Revolution of Gender and Sexuality: A Case Study of 'the Legend of Zelda: Botw'

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Oral Presentation

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Digital spaces, with their possibility of pushing boundaries of reality, and fantastic imagination, have offered new spaces and possibilities to portray, represent and narrate gender and sexuality. Although this has not always been the case, in many gaming spaces there have been ample possibilities for the players to adopt new identities and/or relate with pseudo and temporary identities other than their actual ones, in the characters, stories, and in relation to other players. Existing literature of digital gaming spaces have shown that gender and sexuality have existed in relation to other identity markers such as race, age, color, and have been presented in diverse ways in gaming spaces. In this research, I aim to investigate the content of the popular digital game 'The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild' (hereafter referred to as BotW). BotW is a well-known fantasy action and adventure digital game, and the last release of the series 'The Legend of Zelda' in 2017. I discuss the prominence of a heteronormative narrative beside the queer subtext, and the possibility of an existing queerbaiting approach in this form of digital media. By this case study, and using existing literature of feminist digital media and gaming studies, I try to respond to the question whether the new digital media, such as gaming spaces could be pioneer spaces for applying the changing gender perspectives.